

JUL 26 2006

PATENT

REMARKS

Claims 1-98 were pending in the application.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-9, 16-24, and 27-98.

The Examiner also objected to claims 10-15, 25 and 26 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter.

To expedite prosecution of the application, in the forgoing amendments, independent claims 1 and 16 have been amended to explicitly incorporate respective limitations of claims 10 and 25 (and those of respective intervening claims), and are therefore in condition for allowance. (Claims 11 -12 and 26 - 27 have also been amended accordingly to ensure proper antecedence basis.) Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

Independent claim 31 has been amended to explicitly incorporate limitations of claim 25 (and those of intervening claims) and thus recites features analogous to features found in the amended claim 16. Claim 31 is also in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 31 be withdrawn.

Dependent claims 2-8, 11-15, 17-23, 26-30 each depend from one of independent claims 1 and 16, and are allowable as well. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

Claims 9-10, 24-25, and 32-98 have been cancelled without prejudice and disclaimer to subject matter disclosed herein.

Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments.

PATENT

REQUEST FOR ALLOWANCE

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all pending claims in the application are patentable. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited. Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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